

# THE Zera Emes זרע אמת PROJECT

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לבנך  
Keeping  
Their  
Torah Alive.



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The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation.

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## Every Detail is Counted and Hashem Runs the World

In the first *passuk* it states, “A man went from Beis Lechem Yehudah to sojourn in the fields of Moab, with his wife and two sons.” Immediately afterward, the text specifies his name, Elimelech, his wife's name, Naami, and the names of his two children. This structure seems unusual, why introduce him in such vague terms only to provide the details one *passuk* later? Why not simply state the facts from the beginning?

The Midrash teaches that the Heavenly Court was initially in judgment of this family for leaving their people to travel to a foreign land amid a famine.

At first, the Heavenly Court chose not to reveal their identity to “protect” the guilty party. This suggests that there was something positive—or at least understandable—about their actions that warranted protection. However, when the court ultimately prosecuted them and found them guilty, their names were disclosed. This means that the first two *pessukim* are not simply a case of secrecy followed by revelation; rather, they present two sides of the argument.

The *Nachalas Yosef* reminds us that these were not ordinary citizens, but rather leaders. They were –as the first *passuk* notes – from the *shevet* of Yehudah and had the potential to establish the Davidic dynasty. Instead, the dynasty was formed through Boaz, their relative. It is essential to recognize that



NACHALAS YOSEF: RAV YOSEF ZEV LIPOWITZ

they were not simple individuals; their actions must have had some logical, even commendable, qualities.

According to basic law, a person is not only permitted to leave a country



experiencing famine but is encouraged to do so in search of better conditions. This precedent exists in Jewish history—our forefathers also left Eretz Yisrael during periods of famine. The unnamed family introduced at the start of the story of Rus certainly had a strong defense they could have presented before the Heavenly Court.

Another Midrash compares them to foxes hiding in the shadows and were held accountable for failing to daven for the people and for the famine to end. Elimelech's judgment was harsh because, although his reasoning may have been justified for a private individual, as a leader of the Jewish nation, his responsibilities were different. His people depended on him, and in that position, he had an obligation to daven for them and lead them through the crisis. Shevet Yehudah, known as the lion, is meant to lead from the front. By abandoning the nation, Elimelech acted selfishly—his personal survival took precedence over communal responsibility. He was a fox hiding in the shadows.

His failure to daven stemmed from his loss of hope in Bnei Yisrael. The nation understood here was a leader who could

have gathered them, guided them toward teshuvah, and helped them improve spiritually, which in turn could have ended the famine. Instead, he fled. More than that, he fled to Moav, a nation long hostile to the Jewish people, infamous for refusing food to Bnei Yisrael in the wilderness. His departure left the Jews who remained behind in desperation—they felt their leader had abandoned them.

Remarkably, despite his unfavorable judgment and tragic fate—perishing in a foreign land with no progeny, disappearing entirely from history without even a known burial site—his name appears in the opening *pessukim* of Megillas Rus, a story that ultimately leads to the creation of the Davidic dynasty. This teaches us a profound lesson: even though individuals may be held accountable for their actions, Hashem directs the course of history. These individuals were, nonetheless, catalysts in shaping destiny. The dynasty could have emerged through another path, but it did not—because, in some way, Elimelech and his family initiated the unfolding story.

This principle is even broader. Sometimes, historical events occur through people whose intentions are completely negative.

Take, for example, the sale of Yosef into slavery—his brothers acted with ill intent, yet Yosef was the one who ultimately saved them during the famine. No matter what happens, the outcome will always be what Hashem wants.

Fascinatingly, the phrase “and a man went” appears only twice in the Torah: once here, when Elimelech left Eretz Yisrael during famine, and once when Amram remarried his wife during the harshest period of the Egyptian exile—leading to the birth of the savior, Moshe Rabbeinu (*Shemos* 2:1). Amram's remarriage instilled hope among Jewish slaves, while Elimelech's departure led to despair. Yet both actions ultimately set the stage for redemption—Moshe leading Bnei Yisrael from Egypt to Sinai to receive the Torah, and Elimelech's departure initiating the events that would result in the Davidic dynasty and, ultimately, our final *geulah*.

On a practical level, this teaches us an invaluable lesson: no matter how bleak a situation appears, the result will always align with Hashem's will, which eventually will be revealed to the entire world, with Him dwelling openly among us, *bimeheirah biyameinu*.

## ר' יוסף זאב ליפוביץ

Rav Yosef Zev Lipowitz (1889 - 8 Nisan 1962) was born near Bialystok to Rav Baruch a chasid of Kotzk. At 16 he joined the Slobodka Yeshiva where Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein recognized the dazzling talents and allowed him into his inner circle. He became Rav Moshe Mordechai's substitute in the town shiur when Rav Moshe Mordechai was unavailable. He was also very close with the Alter of Slobodka and lived with his approach of *gadlus ha'adam* and aspire to greatness. Because of these two relationships he became great in torah and halachah and deep thinking mussar.

In 1912, Rav Yosef Zev spent time with the Meshech

Chochmah when the latter came to Kovna (across the bridge from Slobodka). In the back of Nachlas Yosef they published the handwritten letter with it's glorious titles that the Meshech Chochmah bestowed upon Rav Yosef.

He married Baila from Rutiva and when married, she opened a store and with the money they earned, he opened a yeshiva there that produced great talmidim.

In 1924 they emigrated to Tel Aviv - and fulfilled his mission to bring people closer to Torah. When Rav Ehrenson opened a yeshivah he became a leading rebbi there until 1935 when health issues prevented him from continuing. But he continued giving shiurim including in Yeshivas Ohr Zoreah in Yafo.

His original thoughts continued to flow from him. The shiurim enthralled the listeners. The peoples inner souls connected to his passionate words that captured them.

To earn money, they opened their home as a “room and board” which became a place for talmidei chachamim to gather and enjoy each other's company.

After he passed, his wife sold her belongings to help publish his sefarim. This sefer uses the Midrash to bring out the beauty of the story of Rus and it's underlying practical lessons that we can use today. Rav Aaron Lopiansky gave shiurim on Rus from this sefer and published it under the title, Seed Of Redemption.